

IREX
Kosovo Independent Media Program
(CA no. 167-A-01-00107-00)

Quarterly Report
April 1, 2004 – June 30, 2004

IREX submits this quarterly report in accordance with the requirements of the Kosovo Independent Media Program (CA no. 167-A-01-00107-00). IREX feels the report provides sufficient detail to allow USAID to adequately monitor the program or ask follow-up questions. IREX/DC and field staff has maintained close contact throughout the quarter on program implementation. IREX welcomes USAID comments and questions on the report, directed to Jill Jarvi, Senior Program Officer (jjarvi@irex.org).

I. SUMMARY

This quarter the Kosovo Independent Media Program (KIMP) focused on offering sales and marketing advice, conducting business and news production training, releasing the results and analysis of the fourth television audience survey, and assisting media association activities. Concurrently, IREX continued to work with national television stations KTV and RTV 21 to improve their business and programming strategies as part of an agreement between the two stations and USAID/OSI/IREX as a result of a meeting in Budapest in January 2003.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **National Broadcaster RTV 21 Upgrades Production Equipment.** With IREX financial assistance, RTV 21 was able to purchase new equipment that reflects a greater investment in cameras, tripods and microphones. This equipment will allow RTV 21 management to permanently assign specific production equipment to each cameraman, thereby greatly increasing accountability and operational flexibility.
- **Radio Vala Rinore Improves Production Capabilities.** Local radio station Vala Rinore acquired new computer, editing and recording equipment with financial support from IREX. The equipment will enable faster and higher quality audio editing, increase the professional production of the station's programs, and improve the station's ability to provide its audience with current, high-quality news.
- **AMPEK Issues Recommendations on New Media Laws.** AMPEK, the national broadcasters' association, in cooperation with the three national TV stations (RTK, RTV 21 and KTV), the Temporary Media Commissioner (TMC) and the OSCE, raised a number of objections to the original draft of the Law of Cinematography, which is threatening to significantly impede the further development of independent media.

- **National Broadcasters KTV and RTV 21 Move Closer to Self-sustainability.** IREX consultant Andrew Clayton conducted a quarterly review of the national independent television stations KTV and RTV 21 and reported positive growth rates in their advertising income, demonstrating the benefits of utilizing the marketing and business advice provided through IREX over the last 18 months.
- **IREX Hosts Seminar to Discuss Media Performance during March Riots.** In the month of April, IREX organized a one-day seminar entitled "Media under Fire" to address the controversial local media coverage of the recent March riots. The seminar, attended by more than sixty participants, allowed local journalists, photographers, cameramen and editors to discuss their experiences, review their work and analyze the mistakes they made in their reporting.

II. BACKGROUND

Just three weeks after the March riots, police and KFOR announced that 180 persons of different ethnicities had been arrested in connection with the preceding month's civil unrest. Kosovo's parliamentary delegates established an ad hoc committee to evaluate the outbreak of violence and to determine what actually took place and why in Kosovo during March 17 – 18. The detailed findings will serve as a basis for overcoming the problems identified during the meeting of the parliament presidency.

In April, the Cinematographers of Kosovo organized a public debate on the draft Law on Cinematography following a media campaign against this proposed legislation. In its current form, this law grants the Ministry of Culture certain regulatory powers that will intrude on the authority and responsibilities of the TMC and the future Independent Media Commission (IMC), and are tantamount to censorship. The cinematography law remains inconsistent with general European practice and its vaguely worded articles leave too much room for interpretation. The main subject of the discussions was whether TV stations should pay a fee to Kosovo's Film Center for each foreign film they broadcast. The three national TV stations have strongly rejected such a proposal, but said that they should not be perceived as uninterested in the development of local film production in Kosovo.

In the month of May, Miklos Haraszti, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, criticized the reporting of the Kosovar media during the March riots, particularly that of the three national television stations (RTK, TV21 and KTV). Haraszti issued his evaluation of the media's performance in a press conference held in Prishtina, where for the first time he presented the OSCE report "The Role of the Media in the March 2004 Events in Kosova." The same report was also presented on April 22 to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna. According to Haraszti, it is necessary that in cases of political and ethnic tension, broadcast and print media must be aware of the need to inform the public with a minimum of emotional content and instead provide careful and credible content. In a related statement, Carsten Weber, Chief of the OSCE's Human Rights and Rule of Law Department, said that UNMIK has a legal obligation to take responsibility for the failure of its legal and rule of law institutions during the riots in March. Meanwhile, KFOR suggested review of its reactions during the riots of March.

In honor of World Press Freedom Day on May 3, the Human Rights Center at the University of Prishtina organized a roundtable entitled "Freedom of Speech and

Information – Legal Framework and the Reality in Kosova,” in cooperation with the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Among other issues, participating journalists pointed out that an integrated media system does not exist in Kosova; that the media is politicized and that problems within the media sector are dealt with in a black and white approach; and that journalists cannot exercise their freedom of speech, which in particular is due to the pressure they receive from their editors-in chief and other outside influences.

In June, representatives of the OSCE and the Secretariat of the Central Election Commission (CEC) announced the launch of the certification process for political entities that plan on participating in the October 2004 parliamentary elections. The deadline for submitting applications was June 24. The start of the certification process was made possible by the adoption of two crucial regulations governing the conduct of elections: the Code of Conduct for Political Parties, Candidates and Supporters, and the Regulation for Political Party Certification. So far, 33 political parties have applied to the CEC secretariat for certification in order to participate in the October elections. Adnan Merovci, head of the secretariat, said that all Kosovar ethnic groups were represented.

In a farewell meeting with resigned UNMIK chief Harri Holkeri, PDK Chairman Hashim Thaci emphasized that UNMIK's future role in Kosovo will be decreasing and that hence more competencies should be transferred to the local authorities. “The sooner UNMIK is reduced, the quicker the political process in Kosovo will move forward,” opined Thaci. Earlier in May, Holkeri resigned after being hospitalized due to his deteriorating health.

In a related development, hundreds of Kosovar citizens took to the street in front of UNMIK headquarters with protest signs, one of them requesting UNMIK to leave Kosovo and take Resolution 1244 with them. The negative sentiment is in response to UNMIK's failure to ensure more tangible progress with democratic, economic and social processes. Kosova Action Network (KAN) organized the protest on the fifth anniversary of UNMIK's administration of Kosovo. Protesters feel that UNMIK does not have the support of the local population and that it has failed to secure peace and progress in general.

Also in June, a survey was conducted by market research company Index-Kosova, in cooperation with Gallup International, on the public's opinion on Kosovar politics. The survey shows that the three main Albanian political parties have lost the support of Kosovar citizens. Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi leads the list of politicians with the largest support. Visar Berisha, head of Index Kosova, explained that the survey was conducted between May 25 and 31, 2004 and that it included 998 respondents older than 18 years of age, who are Albanian or an ethnic minority other than Serb.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

PROGRAM ACTIVITY – 1. TRAINING

1.1 Radio Training

No activities this period.

1.2 Television Training

An IREX local consultant successfully completed an on-site training program on camerawork and editing for six regional television stations in order to improve visually their news and information programs. The trainer gave the stations' camera crews theory lessons, camera instruction and editing training.

In May, IREX Television Media Advisor Blerim Krasniqi contacted four companies that provide field safety training journalists. IREX/Kosovo received bids from all four companies, but due to lack of funds, this training activity has been put on hold.

Independent filmmaker Ramzan Hajdini submitted a project proposal to IREX for printing a book on producing documentaries. The book would provide instruction and guidance on the production process and covers the entire process from writing a proposal to postproduction. The subgrant request was evaluated by IREX COP Matt Shelley.

IREX staff also worked on developing an instructional book on camera work, which is written by Sulejman Kllokoqi, a cameraman with APTN. This book is composed of 16 chapters that outline the work of cameramen and is designed to serve as a student handbook at Prishtina University and as a practical handbook for cameramen who are currently working in different Kosovo TV stations that lack professional camera work. The book will be the first practical guide and teaching tool for camera work ever published in Kosovo in the Albanian language. IREX will maintain the copyrights and copies of this book will be delivered free of charge to all Kosovo TV stations. IREX/Pristina is also working with other IREX field offices to determine whether or not there is additional interest in the book in other countries with Albanian-speaking populations (e.g., Macedonia, Southern Serbia, Albania and Montenegro).

In June, IREX staff worked with Driton Hapciu from KTTN to develop a database that can be used by regional television stations for archiving their tapes. Currently none of the stations have an archive system, and some do not archive their tapes at all. By developing this software template, the stations will have an easy means to archive and track tapes. Simplified access to archived material can contribute greatly to the quality of programs produced by regional stations.

During the quarter IREX training coordinator Behar Zogiani analyzed RTK programs for one week to compare the public station's priorities and how they compare with RTV 21's. IREX consultant Graeme Moreland was particularly interested in how much time each station devoted to news and informative programs during prime broadcast times.

1.3 Print Training

Agron Shala, a journalist from the daily newspaper *Zeri*, was selected to travel to The Hague to report on the International Criminal Tribunal of the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) from mid-May through mid-July 2004. Syzana Bytyqi from *Koha Ditore* returned to Kosovo in late May after covering ICTY events and activities for two months, beginning in mid-March. IREX staff member Emine Berisha continues to monitor the selected journalists' articles in the local press and share copies of translated articles with IREX staff.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY – 2. GENERAL NEWS TRAINING

2.1 Enterprise and Investigative Reporting

In light of March events, IREX developed a detailed proposal for training at the two national private TV stations, KTV and TV 21, for USAID consideration. This proposed training is still under discussion.

In the beginning of April, IREX organized an important training event for the media sector. The “Media Under Fire” seminar, which addressed issues of media performance during the March riots, brought together all major players from the international community, the government, and the media, as well as media experts and analysts. The seminar included criticism of media performance by the Temporary Media Commissioner (TMC) and international institutions. Chief editors of all three national TV stations (RTK, KTV and TV 21) were given an opportunity to respond and experts analyzed coverage and international reaction to it.

IREX Media Advisor Blerim Krasniqi produced and presented a 10-minute video with clips from the news programs that were aired on the three national television stations on the 16th, 17th and 18th of March at the opening of the seminar. Journalists, photographers and cameramen discussed their experiences, in trying to cover the chaotic and dangerous riots that followed the drowning of three Albanian children near Mitrovica. Editors admitted that mistakes in coverage had been made, although they also criticized the lack of cooperation and availability of the responsible international institutions. Spokesmen for some international institutions, including UNMIK and OSCE, also admitted that mistakes had been made on their end as well and pledged better assistance to media in the future. A summary of the seminar is available upon request.

2.2 Economics and Business Training

Under the provisions of the current no-cost extension budget, funds were not available for additional business reporting seminars this quarter.

2.3 Women’s Issues

No activities this quarter.

2.4 Minority Media

In April, Behar Zogiani monitored the news from Mitrovica-based Radio Contact Plus to find out more background information about this media outlet. After the listening to recordings of the main news blocks, Zogiani drafted a report evaluating the professional level of Radio Contact Plus news.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY – 3. KTTN

3.1 Operations and Equipment

Local authorities continued their investigation into the alleged theft of diesel fuel and/or fraudulent billing at KTTN during the quarter. IREX Media Adviser Les Robinson traveled to Pristina from Belgrade to conduct an independent investigation for IREX and

develop recommendations to improve management systems and procurement procedures at KTTN. Robinson interviewed 14 KTTN employees, examined documents and spoke with police investigators. A final report and recommendations were sent to USAID in April. In addition, IREX COP Shelley agreed to review all KTTN expenditures pending resolution of the investigation and development of a reorganization plan for KTTN.

In May, IREX COP Shelley met with the criminal investigator and judge assigned to the case; they expect to make a decision on whether to prosecute on the allegations within the next few months.

A special KTTN board meeting was held on May 25 to discuss the criminal investigation, distribute the consultant's report and discuss IREX and USAID concerns about the management structure and other KTTN issues. Board members were given the consultant's report, the IREX investigation and recommendations completed by Les Robinson, a list of allegations from KTTN Technical Director Fatmir Berisha and the response from Administration Director Ridvan Jusufi.

A follow-up meeting was organized in June and the KTTN board met to discuss concerns about management and to begin the process of reviewing the consultants report. Matt briefed the board on the decision to rehire an employee who was cleared of theft accusations by the court. The board was also advised of KTTN's severe financial condition, exacerbated by the failure of any TV or radio station to pay for services as agreed. Board members from RTV21, KTV and RTK requested one month to put together a proposal for future operation of the system. USAID and IREX agreed.

During the quarter, COP Matt Shelley and Ridvan Jusufi of KTTN met with two men who claim ownership of the KTTN transmitter and tower site on Pristina Hill. Although KTTN has an agreement with a water company, which also claims ownership of the property, the two brothers claim they were never compensated for the property and have taken the matter to civil court. In an effort to determine legitimacy of the various claims of ownership, Shelley and Jusufi also met with officials of the Batlava Water Company, who have agreed to obtain public land ownership records that will support their claim to land on Pristina Hill, a KTTN transmission site.

IREX conducted a tender in May for an audit of KTTN and received bids from three audit companies in the region, selecting Ernst and Young as the lowest priced bid. The audit is expected to take place at the end of the summer.

USAID approved a subgrant for KTTN operating funds in May. Under agreement with USAID and KTTN, IREX will provide monthly transfers, based on KTTN estimates of expenses and following reconciliation of expenditures from the previous month.

Television Media Advisor Blerim Krasniqi and Technical Media Advisor Shkumbin Rama visited six KTTN transmission sites (Golesh, Koliq, Maja e Gjelber, Prishtina Hill, Zatriq and Cernusha), the RTK radio building and the KTTN office in order to check on all IREX/USAID-purchased equipment over \$5000. All equipment is tagged with IREX stickers and appears on the IREX inventory list.

3.2 Professional and Technical Training

No activities this quarter.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY – 4. MEDIA SUPPORT

4.1 Television and Radio Technical Assistance

At the direction of USAID, additional activities will not be funded under this workplan and IREX denied pending subgrant applications for a number of local television and radio stations. The request for a no-cost extension, and associated budget adjustments, has limited funding available for additional subgrants for TV and radio stations, with the possible exception of TV Mitrovica.

4.2 Support to Television

IREX staff continued to work with both national TV stations on subgrants for equipment purchases. In April, COP Matt Shelley met with representatives of RTV 21 in order to make substantial changes to the station's previous \$285,000 equipment list. Plans to develop a comprehensive news studio were delayed so the station could concentrate on buying field production equipment; the new list was reviewed and approved by Shelley and IREX's technical consultant Peter Williams.

Early in the quarter IREX staff finalized payment and delivery schedules with On-Air in the U.K. for the KTV equipment. The first shipment of KTV equipment arrived in June, with the remainder of the \$338,000 shipment anticipated in early July. IREX expects installation and testing to be completed by early August. IREX staff also worked with KTV to develop a subgrant request for the purchase of programming planned for 2004 and the first quarter of 2005. The programming includes children's cartoons and other programs; educational documentaries on history, science, and culture; British serials, films and situation comedies.

In addition to equipment and programming acquisition, IREX staff also assisted RTV 21 and KTV with a variety of other matters including advertising sales, operating budgets and other operational issues. During the quarter, RTV 21 owner Aferdita Kelmendi entered into negotiations for a formal lease for her space in the Rilindja building. At her request, IREX assisted Kelmendi in discussions with the Kosovo Transitional Authority (KTA) regarding a lease contract for existing and additional studio space for TV 21. Agreement was reached for a maximum one year lease allowed by the KTA.

In June, Shelley attended the Discop television program marketing conference in Budapest and met with program producers and distributors who could possibly provide programs for Kosovo TV stations. A number of program distributors indicated they may be able to grant rights specifically to Kosovo, rather than to the former Yugoslavia, which has greatly complicated program purchasing in the past. Shelley's plans to attend the conference with Aferdita Kelmendi (RTV21) and Leke Zherka (KTV) were defeated by customs agents at the Budapest airport who refused their travel documents and denied them entry to Hungary.

IR 4.3 Development of Supporting Institutions

IR 4.3.1 APJK

IREX staff member Emine Berisha began working as an adviser to the journalist association APJK this quarter, taking over for Filloreta Bytyci who left IREX in April to join the Prime Minister's office. Berisha is evaluating APJK's project proposals for a journalist training program. The continuation of this training program is designed to advance journalism professional values among media practitioners in Kosovo. According to the project proposal, APJK will run introductory courses providing basic writing skills, advanced courses on investigative reporting, as well as interview and research techniques. APJK has also submitted a subgrant proposal for support that would allow the association to further develop its website. The web domain already exists under the address: www.kosovajournalist.org

IR 4.3.2 AMPEK

Over the course of the reporting period, Berisha had several meetings with Ardita Zejhullahu to obtain information and get up to speed on AMPEK's latest activities. Currently, AMPEK is giving its recommendations on the Law on Cinematography, the Law on Consumer Protection, and copyright regulation.

The draft law on cinematography, which was a threat to the private TV stations because of taxation and freedom of expression issues, has been substantially changed. As a result of AMPEK's efforts -- working in conjunction with the national TV stations (including RTK), the TMC and OSCE -- all references to the television stations have been removed from the law.

In June, at the request of USAID, IREX staff met with the director of AMPEK and, later, with member Aferdita Kelmendi to draft a letter to the Council of Ministries, urging passage of the IMC law. Action on the letter was delayed, at Kelmendi's request, until some of the ministers could be contacted informally for discussions.

IREX consultant Graeme Moreland conducted a two-day leadership and management training seminar for AMPEK members at the Grand Hotel in April. There were approximately 20 participants.

COP Matt Shelley accompanied representatives from AMPEK and the TMC office to TV MEN in Gjilane, where police had served a search warrant and seized tapes for an investigation of the television coverage of the March riots. After interviewing the chief editor, the president of the district court, the prosecutor and the TMC, IREX staff prepared background information concerning the raid carried out by the UNMIK police at TV MEN in Gjilane, and requested assistance from Covington & Burling attorney Kurt Wimmer. Examples of journalist shield laws used in the United States have been obtained and preliminary discussions have started on the need for similar journalist protection in Kosovo.

IR 4.4 KosovaLive News Agency

IREX staff worked with KosovaLive to develop a subgrant request for new computer equipment and content management software; however, the request was not submitted for approval as USAID decided to discontinue assistance to KosovaLive under the current KIMP workplan in order to accommodate a no-cost extension of the program.

COP Matt Shelley met with KosovaLive's chief editor, Kelmend Hapciu, to discuss ways to keep the agency operational.

IREX business consultant Andrew Clayton, who works with the national TV stations, agreed to provide limited business advice to KosovaLive in order to keep the news agency operational until additional donor funding or new sources of revenue can be located. Clayton made his first visit to KosovaLive in May and completed a much-needed business plan in June. The business plan recognizes KosovaLive's precarious financial condition and addresses possible new sources of revenue; in particular, a new business news service that would be supported by the OSCE and Press Now. The business service initiative will require new computer equipment and software; USAID was advised that without this equipment KosovaLive will not be able to move forward on possible revenue producing projects or other plans for improving financial viability.

IR 4.5 Efficient Business Management

IREX consultant Graeme Moreland traveled to Pristina for a two-week period beginning April 5 to continue his sales and marketing work with TV 21 and KTV. Moreland returned to Kosovo in June and worked with the two national stations on the analysis of the Index Kosova poll, training sales staff at the stations and making programming decisions for the autumn program schedule.

Business consultant Andrew Clayton conducted his quarterly review of KTV and RTV 21 in May. Feedback from his consultancy report that revenue growth at both stations continues at a healthy pace; donor funds, as a percentage of revenue, are now down to approximately 30 percent, compared with 50 percent only 18 months ago. Both stations have substantially improved their sales and marketing departments, and Clayton has helped both stations develop new business plans. The TV 21 plan anticipates self-sustainability by the end of 2005, KTV's plan envisages sustainability in 2006.

IREX requested for bids for audits of both KTV and TV 21, and received proposals from two international accounting firms. IREX selected Ernst & Young to conduct the audits and anticipates that work will begin in July or August.

IR 4.6 Market Research

In the absence of funding for the continuation of TV viewer research through Helen Harrison and Company, COP Matt Shelley met with Index Kosova representatives and negotiated the purchase of quarterly survey data for the IREX office, KTV and RTV 21. IREX obtained the first survey results of the Index Kosova TV viewer research in June. The research revealed a stunning success story for TV 21, as the station continued its rapid growth and is now firmly entrenched as the most-watched station in Kosovo, based on the share of average weekly viewing. Unfortunately, KTV fell to a distant third, behind the previous number-one-rated station, RTK

PROGRAM ACTIVITY – 5. LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

IR 5.0 Legal and Regulatory Framework

IREX's Manager of Media Law and Associations, Filloreta Bytyci, resigned effective April 1, in order to manage a new restructuring project in the Prime Minister's office. Due to budget constraints under the no-cost extension, her position will not be filled for the remainder of the KIMP program. COP Matt Shelley is now representing IREX on issues involving legal and regulatory framework. Emine Berisha, General Manager for Media, will be responsible for facilitating planned seminars on the freedom of information, court reporting and other media law topics.

In June, Shelley met with TMC Bob Gillette to discuss how to proceed with IREX efforts to protect TV stations from possibly illegal search and seizure missions by police authorities. The police have been requesting, and in some instances forcibly taking, copies of tapes of broadcasts that include coverage of the March riots in Kosovo. A memorandum from IREX's pro bono media attorney Kurt Wimmer of the Washington law firm Covington & Burling will be used to draft a letter to Justice Ministry officials. KTV has become the latest target of police confiscation of tapes from the March riots and station director Leke Zherka referred the police to Gillette and the TMC, where their tapes of the incident still reside. Additional work on this issue is expected in July.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER ISSUES

During the month of April, IREX received a request from media analyst and teacher of media sociology at Prishtina University, Ibrahim Berisha, to lead a one-day discussion about media for his students. This event was organized by IREX staff Behar Zogiani and included a presentation from Media Manager Emine Berisha on media development issues.

In May, IREX COP Shelley was invited to make a presentation on the KIMP program to USOP, USAID and other implementing partners. Following the presentation, several NGOs expressed interest in working on joint projects. These activities included training workshops for journalists and judges (National Center for State Courts) and training for public relations professionals on their relationships with the media from the journalist's perspective (Bearing Point for the Economic Reconstruction Project).

Shelley also participated in an OSCE donor's conference, together with USAID representatives, at the Grand Hotel on May 17. The meeting was organized to discuss future media assistance in light of the March riots. OSCE officials indicated they may provide some future support for a *bona fide* training institute for journalists.

Also in May, IREX/Serbia COP Sam Compton visited Prishtina to discuss several topics, including the establishment of a B92 bureau and cross border reporting.

In lieu of television training funded directly by KIMP, IREX staff developed an extensive training program for the national TV stations and submitted a proposal to World Learning for potential funding through its USAID-funded Participatory Training Program.

The no-cost extension budget was finalized and submitted to USAID this quarter. At USAID's request, the budget provides for continued operation and staffing of the IREX office at its present level, while a number of activities and subgrants were taken out of the budget.

The month of June also witnessed another evaluation of the media under KIMP. USAID hired an independent assessment team to review IREX's performance under the Kosovo Independent Media Program and to make recommendations about the next media assistance program. Members of the team included two retired newspaper journalists from the United States and two local newspaper journalists from *Koha Ditore*. The team met with IREX staff on numerous occasions, and reviewed financial documents from IREX/DC as well as other program-related documentation from the Prishtina office. The draft report is expected in July after which USAID will solicit comments from IREX before it is made public.

Subaward Overview

The table below summarizes the Subawards, totaling USD 760,933.17, awarded during the third quarter of FY2004.

Subgrant	Recipient	Amount
FY04-KTTN-04 (Modification) <i>Operational Costs & Equipment</i>	KTTN	\$392,304.57
FY04-RTV21-03 <i>Equipment</i>	RTV 21	290,646
FY04-VR-01 <i>Equipment</i>	Vala Rinore	10,412
FY04-KTV-03 <i>Movies</i>	KTV	43,750.60
FY04-APJK-01 <i>Operational</i>	APJK	15,575
FY04-AMPEK-01 <i>Operational</i>	AMPEK	8,245
Total		\$760,933.17